

FINANCE, ASSET & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Monday 22nd January, 2018 at 9.30am.

PRESENT: Councillors: Cllr R Hartley (Chair), P Goulbourne, Mrs E Peers, Mrs A Wignall and Mrs J Williams
Mandy Evans – Town Clerk
Phil Smith – Assistant Clerk

FAR-1/17 Election of Chair

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr Mrs J Williams and

RESOLVED – that Cllr R Hartley be elected Chair of the Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

FAR-2/17 Election of Vice-Chair

It was moved by Cllr Mrs E Peers, seconded by Cllr Mrs J Williams and

RESOLVED – that Cllr P Goulbourne be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

FAR-3/17 To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.

RESOLVED - that the apology received from Cllr G Elner – prior appointment – be approved.

FAR-4/17 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda

Cllr P Goulbourne declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the grant application by the Plantation Wood Group for consideration at agenda item 7 – Budget Deliberations for 2018/19.

FAR-5/17 Grant Dispersations

None received.

FAR-6/17 Public Question Time

No questions had been received and no members of the public were present.

FAR-7/17 Budget Deliberations 2018/19

The Town Clerk explained that the Committee was being asked to consider the draft budget for 2018/19, and put forward recommendations to a special budget meeting of the Town Council on 29 January 2018. The draft budget estimates for 2018/19, budget explanations document and a Loan breakdown had been circulated with the agenda. The draft budget as presented was suggesting a zero increase in the Council Tax precept. Adjustments had been made to the budget



to take account of the Council's responsibilities for the Joint Burial Committee from 1 April 2018.

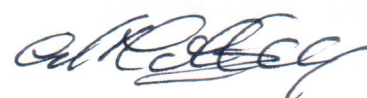
The Committee went through the draft budget estimates, and a number of questions were asked in relation to website expenses, licences, professional fees, advertising and grounds maintenance – for which the Town Clerk was able to offer clarification. Consideration was given to applications for grants/donations in 2018/19 from Ellesmere Rotary Club, Ellesmere Scout Group, Ramped CIC, Fizzgigs, Ellesmere Brownies Group, Ellesmere In Bloom and the Plantation Wood Group. It was noted that there were more applications this year, and it was felt that while the Rotary Club had received a grant towards the Regatta event over a number of years, the bulk of the money they raised from the event did not directly benefit the town. It was therefore proposed that each of the applicants, with the exception of the Rotary Club, be awarded a grant/donation of £250. Reference was made to the current position of Ramped CIC which was facing losing its funding from Shropshire Council, and it was agreed that checks would be made on the situation before releasing the grant money. The Town Clerk suggested that the £250 left over in the Grants/Donations budget could be moved to the Christmas Lighting budget to help cover any additional costs with the 2018 scheme.

Consideration was given to capital works, and it was recommended that loans be taken out to cover the deficit over and above the Public Realm grant of the cost of the new Town Hall lobby, and towards the costs of installing new SOX lamps in all the Council's street lighting columns. Reference was made to the erection of a bus shelter in Trimpey Street which was in the Place Plan, but it was agreed that this wasn't a priority for inclusion in next year's budget.

There was a discussion about the condition of the Town Hall, and whether the "stand still" estimate was enough, particularly as works were needed regarding the water tank above the Main Hall and possibly to the toilets area. The Town Clerk stated that she would look to undertake a Maintenance Plan for the Town Hall that would identify the priorities for works. However, the re-varnishing of the Main Hall floor was an urgent priority, and it was proposed that £3000 be taken from reserves to pay for that. Given the importance of maintaining the Town Hall to a suitable standard for all the local community groups that made use of it, it was proposed that the council tax precept could be increased by 2%, with the additional income raised being allocated towards the maintenance of the Town Hall.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to the Full Council

- (a) that the total Town Council budget for 2018/19 be increased by £4,056 (equivalent of 2% increase in the Council Tax precept) to £206,836;**
- (b) that the Town Hall Maintenance budget be increased from £43,000 to £47,056;**
- (c) that all the grant applications for £250 be approved, except for the Rotary Club;**
- (d) that the Grants budget be reduced by £250 to £15,720, with the Christmas Lighting budget being increased by £250 to £8,027;**
- (e) that £3000 be taken from reserves for the re-varnishing of the Main Hall floor at the Town Hall;**
- (f) that the following loans be taken out with the Public Works Loan Board:**
 - £10,000 for the deficit on the cost of the new Town Hall lobby;**



- £16,000 towards the installation of new SOX lamps in all the Council's 83 street lights.

FAR-8/17

Council Tax Precept Request 2018/19

Further to the discussions and recommendations above, it was

RESOLVED – To RECOMMEND to Full Council

(a) that a precept request of £206.836.00 be approved, and that this precept request be made to Shropshire Council with the following financial statement: "Ellesmere Town Council continue to look for ways to ensure best value and service for the community. The increasing demands on the use of Ellesmere Town Hall by local community groups and the need to maintain an aging building to a standard expected by users has necessitated a 2% increase in the precept for 2018/19";

(b) that the Band D Council Tax Base increase is 2.0% from £145.09 to £147.99 = 0.06p per week.

FAR-9/17

Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation Document

The Government was consulting on proposals that affected principal Councils regarding the amount by which they could raise the council tax precept before triggering a referendum of electors/residents. The Government had looked at whether referendums should be applied to Parish/Town Council precept increases, but had decided not to introduce any new requirements for the next three years.

The document was noted.

The meeting closed at 10.24am

Chair:

Date:

